

September 22, 1961

Dr. Barbara McClintock
Carnegie Institution
Cold Spring Harbor
Long Island, New York

Dear Barbara:

This is the information I told you I would provide concerning possibilities as I see them for training and research in cytogenetics of maize in Latin America. The six weeks' trip with Ed Wellhausen was extremely beneficial for me and we covered some 25,000 miles visiting Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Mexico. Much time was given in the search for persons interested in and talented for cytogenetics research. These are prospects for the immediate future and all are extremely interested in study and work with you:

- ✓ 1. Ing (?) Gato, Escuela Nacional de Agricultura, Chapingo, Mexico
- 2. Jose Blanco, Estacion Exp. de Pergamino, Casilla de Correo 31
- ✓ 3. Almiro Blumenshein, Escuela Superior de Agricultura, University of Sao Paulo, Piracicaba, Brazil
- 4. Alfonso Chirinos, Universidad Agraria, Apartado 456, La Molina, Lima, Peru
- ✓ 5. Julio Safonti, Instituto Nacional de Tecnologia Agropecuaria, Buenos Aires, Argentina

I have listed these people in the order of my impression as to their potential and readiness to participate in training and research with you. Now I would give my evaluation based on limited knowledge of each.

- 1. Gato

He is a Mexican citizen and his parents came to Mexico from Japan. He has just completed his Ing. Agronomo degree on cytogenetics of maize while working with A. E. Longley. It was reported to me that his thesis on chromosome knob studies of certain collections was very good and should be submitted for publication. He appears to be Ph.D. caliber and would like to come to the United States to work on the degree. Dr. Wellhausen is planning for him to do the M. S. degree at Chapingo, learn more English and come here in July or September 1962. He is about 25-28 years old and speaks poor English.

2. Blanco (Jose)

There are two of the Blanco brothers working the corn breeding program with Rossi at Pergaminco (Arg.) which is considered home to them. They left Spain and went to Argentina in February 1961 to escape an unbearable life in Spain. Jose impresses me as the sharper of the two and very capable of good research. He is 42 years old and doing routine corn breeding with great hopes of getting back to cytogenetics. He was doing some cytogenetics of chromosome knobs until 1952 but has not been able to continue the work.

Officials in Argentina assured me that he would be made available for further training and research with you. Copies of some of his publications are attached. Blanco speaks good English.

/ 3. Almiro Blumenshein

Dr. Brieger considers him as one of the most capable young men at Piracicaba. You may have already seen reports of his work on orchids. He sent me a copy of his thesis on orchid cytogenetics done with Brieger. He is about 28-30 years old, speaks very little English and expresses great interest in cytogenetics of maize and the opportunity to train and work with you. Whether Brieger will allow him to concentrate on corn is another question. I did get a promise from Brieger that Blumenshein would now start working on corn in preparation for this training and further research.

4. Alfonso Chirinos

This is a young Peruvian who did an outstanding job in the cytogenetics course at La Molina being offered by Dr. Jose Giles (who studied under S. G. Stephens). He is about 22-24 years old, speaks little or no English and probably should go to Mexico (Chapingo) immediately for the M.S. degree and prepare for training in the United States. He is extremely interested in cytogenetics of maize and the possibility of working with you. Cerrate and the group in corn work at La Molina would be anxious to work with Chirinos or someone in establishing a cytogenetics program in the corn research work in Peru.

/ 5. Julio Safontij

This man is about 30-33 years of age and anxious to work in corn cytogenetics. His health is the biggest problem. There have been both mental and physical troubles and I doubt if he could pass a physical examination required if he should wish a fellowship and permission to leave Argentina for study. It may be possible to work with him at Pergamino where he is now working on cytogenetics of maize.

In addition, Blumenshein and the group at Campinas told me of another "very capable young man." He is Warton Monteiro, Rua Rio de Janeiro, 990, Apartado 110, Bolo-Horizonte, MG, Brazil. We tried to call him from Piracicaba but were unsuccessful. I wrote to him and have just received a letter stating that he is "highly interested in training with Dr. McClintock." He is writing to Blumenshein as I suggested to get more of the details.

I have also told you of a postdoctoral candidate from North Africa who is anxious to participate in such training and research with you. He was trained with Burnham (University of Minnesota).

Laboratory facilities and equipment are excellent at Chapingo, Piracicaba and Pergamino. However, in Argentina the work should be centered at Castelar which is just outside Buenos Aires and at the Agricultural School. A laboratory would have to be established and equipped at La Molina, Peru.

I would suggest the following for consideration. These people need intensive graduate training in genetics and related subjects as they prepare for careers in cytogenetics. When they are ready to come, which should be by July or August, 1962, and if support from the Rockefeller Foundation or other agencies could be provided, they would be brought to N. C. State College (or another U. S. institution with a strong genetics program) and commence training under your direction. If you approve such a plan and these individuals based on your personal contact or by evaluation of their records and reports, they might then be assembled here with us. We would provide a laboratory and find ways of getting the necessary microscopic equipment. We would provide space and help grow exotic material here for the training and research programs. All of this would be done under your supervision during the time that you could spend here.

In the summers and when training is complete, each could go to his country where you would visit and help in establishment of his research program in cytogenetics of maize.

Possibly within a year (maybe) the building will be completed at Chapingo for living at the station. This is required if a person is to work a part of each year with the group. Dr. Wellhausen is pushing hard on the building program but may need a little help from higher authorities to break some barriers.

My interest in this is to promote and develop a program in which, I think, you can make tremendous contributions. I don't want to get into it unless it is what you want. If so, then I will work on the plan and I believe we could have it underway by mid-summer, 1962, but probably not before then. A temporary arrangement for space would be necessary here but within two years (fall 1963) we should have a new building.

Dr. Barbara McClintock

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The program must be pushed if it is to be started in 1962. My further activity on this part of the Inter-American Maize Program is for you and the Rockefeller Foundation to decide. Dr. Wellhausen will be in New York for the Director's meeting on October 12. I hope that during his visit to New York you will have a chance to visit with him, Dr. Roberts and Dr. Moseman about this program. I believe that I have given you sufficient information and addresses so that you could correspond with the possible candidates.

Let me know how I can assist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'H. F. Robinson', written in dark ink.

H. F. Robinson, Head
Department of Genetics

HFR:jp

Enclosures

cc: A. H. Moseman
L. M. Roberts
E. J. Wellhausen